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No Related Patents found

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There are no current objections or hearings present

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METHOD FOR MODELLING THREE DIMENSIONAL OBJECTS
AND SIMULATION OF FLUID FLOW

5 This invention relates to a method for modelling solid
objects, particularly for use in the simulation of fluid
flow, to be used for example to simulate prototypes before
production. In a preferred embodiment the method is used
in the design of articles to be manufactured by injection
molding, preferably from molten plastic materials.

10 The modelling of solid objects is employed in various
fields. Such modelling is used, for example, in the
simulation of injection molding. In that field, it is
widely recognized that the filling and packing phases of
15 injection molding have a significant effect on the visual
and mechanical properties of a molded object. Simulation
is employed to analyse proposed shapes and injection
points, and thus the final quality of the ultimate article.
A requirement of any injection mold is that it can be
20 filled with molten polymer given the pressure limits of a
real injection molding machine. Simulation can provide
information as to whether the mold can be filled and the
fill pattern that will be achieved. By using simulation, it
is possible to determine optimum gate locations and
25 processing conditions. It is possible to predict the
location of weld lines and air traps. Economic benefit is
derived from simulation because problems can be predicted
and solutions tested prior to the actual creation of the
mold. This eliminates costly re-working and decreases the
30 time required to get an object into production.

Simulation technology has been developed and generally uses
finite element/finite difference techniques to solve the
governing equations of fluid flow and heat transfer. In
35 order to minimize the time required for analysis and hence
the required computer resources, the Hele-Shaw
approximation is invoked to simplify the governing

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THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS.

- 1 A method for simulating fluid flow within a three
dimensional object having first and second generally
5 opposed surfaces including:
 matching each element of said first surface with
 an element of said second surface between which a
 reasonable thickness may be defined, wherein matched
 elements of said first surface constitute a first set of
10 matched elements and matched elements of said second
 surface constitute a second set of matched elements,
 specifying a fluid injection point,
 performing a flow analysis using each set of said
15 matched elements, whereby said injection point is linked to
 all locations on said first and second surfaces from which
 flow may emanate such that resulting flow fronts along said
 first and second surfaces are synchronized.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said injection
20 point is first linked to all said locations from
 substantially the commencement of said flow analysis
3. A method as claimed in either claim 1 or 2 wherein said
injection point remains linked to all said locations at
25 substantially all times in said flow analysis subsequent to
 being first so linked
4. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims
wherein said injection point is one of a plurality of
30 injection points.
- 5 A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims
wherein said synchronization of said flow fronts is checked
periodically.
35
6. A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein said checking is
performed at each time step.

7 A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein said flow fronts are synchronized if found not to be or no longer to be synchronized.

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8 A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein said first and second generally opposed surfaces are one of a plurality of pairs of generally opposed surfaces

10

9. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein any unmatched elements of said first and second surfaces, being elements that could not be matched, are assigned thicknesses being the average of the thicknesses of adjacent matched elements where such adjacent matched elements exist, or of adjacent unmatched elements where such adjacent matched elements do not exist and said adjacent unmatched elements have been assigned thicknesses.

15

20 10 A method as claimed in claim 9 wherein each element of an edge surface, being a surface between said first and second surfaces, and adjacent to either of said first or second surface is assigned a thickness proportional to the thickness of the element of said first or second surface to which said element of said edge surface is adjacent.

25

11. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein each said element of an edge surface is assigned a thickness between 0.5 and 1.5 times said thickness of the element of said first or second surface to which said element of said edge surface is adjacent.

30

12 A method as claimed in claim 11 wherein each said element of an edge surface is assigned a thickness between 0.7 and 0.9 times said thickness of the element of said first or second surface to which said element of said edge surface is adjacent.

35

13. A method as claimed in claim 12 wherein each said
element of an edge surface is assigned a thickness
approximately 0.75 times said thickness of the element of
5 said first or second surface to which said element of said
edge surface is adjacent.

14. A method as claimed in claim 10 wherein each element
of an edge surface not adjacent to said first or second
10 surface is assigned a thickness being the average of the
thicknesses of adjacent elements of said edge surface that
have been assigned thicknesses

15. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims
15 wherein flow is simulated at a rate directly proportional
to a desired flow rate for the object.

16. A method as claimed in claim 15 wherein said rate is
proportional to the ratio of computational domain volume of
20 said object to real volume of said object.

17. A method as claimed in claim 16 wherein said rate is
substantially equal to the ratio of said computational
domain volume to said real volume.

25 18. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims
wherein said method is performed with first and second
representations of said first and second surfaces
respectively comprising first and second meshes or lattices
30 respectively, wherein said elements are interstices of said
first and second meshes or lattices.

19. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims
wherein said elements are triangular.

35 20. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 18
wherein said elements are quadrilateral.

21 A method as claimed in claim 19 wherein said elements are substantially equilateral.

5 22. A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein said method includes creating said first and second representations.

23. A method as claimed in either claim 18 or 22 wherein said method includes creating improved representations of
10 said first and second surfaces, whereby said elements are elements of said improved representations and said method is performed with said improved representations.

24. A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein said first and
15 second representations are, or are a part of, a representation or representations for stereolithography of said object.

25. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims
20 wherein said method is performed by a computer running a computer program encoding said method for simulating fluid flow.

26. A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims
25 wherein said method includes corrections for non-isothermal temperature fields and/or non-Newtonian fluids.

27. A method for simulating fluid flow within a three dimensional object having first and second generally
30 opposed surfaces including:

providing or creating first and second representations of said first and second surfaces respectively,

35 creating first and second improved representations from said first and second representations respectively,

matching each element of said first improved

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representation of said first surface with an element of
said second improved representation of said second surface
between which a reasonable thickness may be defined,
wherein matched elements of said first improved
5 representation constitute a first set of matched elements
and matched elements of said second improved representation
constitute a second set of matched elements,

specifying a fluid injection point,

10 performing a flow analysis using each set of said
matched elements, whereby said injection point is linked to
all locations on said first and second improved
representations from which flow may emanate such that
resulting flow fronts along said first and second improved
representations are synchronized

15

28 A method as claimed in claim 27 wherein said first and
second representations are, or are a part of, a
representation or representations for stereolithography of
said object.

20

29. A method as claimed in either claim 27 or 28 wherein
said first and second improved representations comprise
small equilateral triangular elements.

25

30. A method for simulating fluid flow within a three
dimensional object having first and second generally
opposed surfaces including:

matching each element of said first surface with
an element of said second surface between which a
30 reasonable thickness may be defined, wherein matched
elements of said first surface constitute a first set of
matched elements and matched elements of said second
surface constitute a second set of matched elements and
said elements are substantially equilateral triangles,

35

specifying a fluid injection point,

performing a flow analysis using each set of said
matched elements, whereby said injection point is linked to

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all locations on said first and second surfaces from which flow may emanate such that resulting flow fronts along said first and second surfaces are synchronized, wherein said first and second representations are, or are a part of, a representation or representations for stereolithography of said object.

31. A method as claimed in claim 30 wherein said injection point is one of a plurality of injection points.

32. A computing device provided with or running a computer program encoding a method for simulating fluid flow as claimed in any one of the preceding claims.

33. A computer storage medium provided with a computer program embodying a method for simulating fluid flow as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 31.

34. A method for modelling a three dimensional object including:

specifying first and second generally opposed surfaces of said object,

forming first and second representations of said first and second surfaces respectively, wherein said first and second representations each comprise a plurality of elements,

matching pairs of elements of said first and second surfaces between which a reasonable thickness may be defined.

35. A method as claimed in claim 34 wherein said first and second representations comprise first and second meshes or lattices respectively, wherein said elements are interstices of said first and second meshes or lattices.

36. A method as claimed in either claim 34 or 35 wherein said elements are triangular.

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37 A method as claimed in claim 36 wherein said elements are substantially equilateral.

5 38. A method as claimed in claim 34 wherein said elements are quadrilateral.

39 A method as claimed in any one of claims 34 to 38 wherein each element of each of said matched pairs of
10 elements is assigned respectively said thickness.

40 A method as claimed in claim 39 wherein unmatched elements of said first and second surfaces are assigned thicknesses being the average of the thicknesses of
15 surrounding, matched elements of said first and second surfaces.

41 A method as claimed in claim 40 wherein any unmatched elements of said first and second surfaces, being elements
20 that could not be matched, are assigned thicknesses being the average of the thicknesses of adjacent matched elements where such adjacent matched elements exist, or of adjacent unmatched elements where such adjacent matched elements do not exist and said adjacent unmatched elements have been
25 assigned thicknesses.

42. A method as claimed in claim 41 wherein each element of an edge surface, being a surface between said first and second surfaces, and adjacent to either of said first or
30 second surface is assigned a thickness proportional to the thickness of the element of said first or second surface to which said element of said edge surface is adjacent

43. A method as claimed in claim 42 wherein each said
35 element of an edge surface is assigned a thickness between 0.5 and 1.5 times said thickness of the element of said first or second surface to which said element of said edge

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surface is adjacent

44. A method as claimed in claim 43 wherein each said
element of an edge surface is assigned a thickness between
5 0.7 and 0.9 times said thickness of the element of said
first or second surface to which said element of said edge
surface is adjacent.

45. A method as claimed in claim 44 wherein each said
10 element of an edge surface is assigned a thickness 0.75
times said thickness of the element of said first or second
surface to which said element of said edge surface is
adjacent.

46. A method as claimed in claim 42 wherein each element
15 of an edge surface not adjacent to said first or second
surface is assigned a thickness being the average of the
thicknesses of adjacent elements of said edge surface that
have been assigned thicknesses.

47 A method for simulating fluid flow within a three
20 dimensional object having first and second generally
opposed surfaces including:

matching each element of said first surface with
25 an element of said second surface between which a
reasonable thickness may be defined, wherein matched
elements of said first surface constitute a first set of
matched elements and matched elements of said second
surface constitute a second set of matched elements,
30 specifying a fluid injection point,
performing a flow analysis using each set of said
matched elements, and
synchronizing flow fronts resulting from said
flow analysis along said first and second surfaces.

48. A method as claimed in claim 47 wherein said flow
35 fronts are synchronized from substantially the commencement

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of said flow analysis.

49 A method as claimed in claim 47 wherein said flow
fronts are first synchronized after the commencement of
5 said flow analysis.

50. A method as claimed in any one of claims 47 to 49
wherein said injection point remains linked to all said
locations at substantially all times in said flow analysis
10 subsequent to being first so linked.

51. A method as claimed in any one of claims 47 to 50
wherein said injection point is one of a plurality of
injection points.
15

52 A method as claimed in any one of claims 47 to 51
wherein said synchronization of said flow fronts is checked
periodically.

20 53. A method as claimed in claim 52 wherein said checking
is performed at each time step.

54. A method as claimed in any one of claims 47 to 53
wherein said flow fronts are synchronized if found not to
25 be or no longer to be synchronized.

55. A method as claimed in any one of claims 47 to 54
wherein said first and second generally opposed surfaces
are one of a plurality of pairs of generally opposed
30 surfaces.

56. A method as claimed in any one of claims 47 to 55
wherein any unmatched elements of said first and second
surfaces, being elements that could not be matched, are
35 assigned thicknesses being the average of the thicknesses
of adjacent matched elements where such adjacent matched
elements exist, or of adjacent unmatched elements where

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such adjacent matched elements do not exist and said adjacent unmatched elements have been assigned thicknesses

57. A method as claimed in claim 56 wherein each element
5 of an edge surface, being a surface between said first and second surfaces, and adjacent to either of said first or second surface is assigned a thickness proportional to the thickness of the element of said first or second surface to which said element of said edge surface is adjacent

10 58. A method as claimed in claim 57 wherein each said element of an edge surface is assigned a thickness between 0.5 and 1.5 times said thickness of the element of said first or second surface to which said element of said edge
15 surface is adjacent.

59. A method as claimed in claim 58 wherein each said element of an edge surface is assigned a thickness between 0.7 and 0.9 times said thickness of the element of said
20 first or second surface to which said element of said edge surface is adjacent.

60 A method as claimed in claim 59 wherein preferably each said element of an edge surface is assigned a
25 thickness approximately 0.75 times said thickness of the element of said first or second surface to which said element of said edge surface is adjacent.

61. A method as claimed in claim 60 wherein each element
30 of an edge surface not adjacent to said first or second surface is assigned a thickness being the average of the thicknesses of adjacent elements of said edge surface that have been assigned thicknesses.

35 62. A method as claimed in any one of claims 47 to 61 wherein flow is simulated at a rate directly proportional to a desired flow rate for the object.

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63. A method as claimed in claim 62 wherein said rate is proportional to the ratio of computational domain volume of said object to real volume of said object.

5

64. A method as claimed in claim 63 wherein said rate is substantially equal to the ratio of said computational domain volume to said real volume.

10 65. A method as claimed in any one of claims 47 to 64 wherein said method is performed with first and second representations of said first and second surfaces respectively comprising first and second meshes or lattices respectively, wherein said elements are interstices of said
15 first and second meshes or lattices.

66. A method as claimed in any one of claims 47 to 65 wherein said elements are triangular.

20 67. A method as claimed in any one of claims 47 to 65 wherein said elements are quadrilateral.

68. A method as claimed in claim 66 wherein said elements are substantially equilateral.

25

69. A method as claimed in claim 65 wherein said method includes creating said first and second representations.

30 70. A method as claimed in claim 65 wherein said method includes creating improved representations of said first and second surfaces, whereby said elements are elements of said improved representations and said method is performed with said improved representations.

35 71. A method as claimed in claim 65 wherein said first and second representations are, or are a part of, a representation or representations for stereolithography of

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said object

72 A method as claimed in any one of claims 47 to 71
wherein said method includes corrections for non-isothermal
5 temperature fields and/or non-Newtonian fluids.

73 A method as claimed in any one of claims 47 to 72
wherein said method is performed by a computer running a
computer program encoding said method for simulating fluid
10 flow.

74 A method for simulating fluid flow within a three
dimensional object having first and second generally
opposed surfaces including
15 matching each element of said first surface with
an element of said second surface between which a
reasonable thickness may be defined, wherein matched
elements of said first surface constitute a first set of
matched elements and matched elements of said second
20 surface constitute a second set of matched elements,
specifying a fluid injection point,
performing a flow analysis using said first set
of matched elements,
adapting said flow analysis to said second set of
25 matched elements, and
synchronizing flow fronts resulting from said
flow analysis and said adaptation of said flow analysis
along said first and second surfaces.

75. A method as claimed in claim 74 wherein said method is
performed with first and second representations of said
first and second surfaces respectively comprising first and
second meshes or lattices respectively, wherein said
elements are interstices of said first and second meshes or
35 lattices.

76. A method as claimed in either claim 74 or 75 wherein

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said elements are triangular.

77. A method as claimed in either claim 74 or 75 wherein
said elements are quadrilateral.

5

78. A method as claimed in claim 76 wherein said elements
are substantially equilateral.

79. A method as claimed in any one of claims 74 to 78
10 wherein said method includes creating said first and second
representations.

80. A method as claimed in any one of claims 74 to 79
15 wherein said method includes creating improved
representations of said first and second surfaces, whereby
said elements are elements of said improved representations
and said method is performed with said improved
representations

20 81. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1, 27 or 47
wherein said synchronization comprises matching pressure
and temperature.

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